

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 051425Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7227
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 0701

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, KU, PLO
SUBJECT: KHALIK AL-HASSAN TURNS NEGATIVE ON 1977 AS YEAR OF SETTLE-
MENT

1. IN A WIDE-RANGING INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL AND APPARENTLY
SOME FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS FEB 3, FATAH LEADER KHALID
AL-HASSAN GAVE GLOOMY ASSESSMENT OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE
CHANCES IN 1977; TOOK SOME SWIPES AT U.S. LEADERSHIP; AND
URGED ARAB NATIONS TO "HEAT-UP" MIDDLE EAST BOTH MILITARILY
AND ECONOMICALLY IF ARABS REALLY WANT TO SOLVE MIDDLE EAST
PROBLEM. IN SAYING ALL THIS, AL-HASSAN WAS CURIOUSLY OUT-OF-
CHARACTER (HE HAS BEEN OUT AHEAD OF OTHER PALESTINIAN LEADERS IN
PROMOTING PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA, AND HE IS RENOWNED FOR MAKING
AS FEW ENEMIES INTERNATIONALLY AS POSSIBLE). OVERALL
IMPRESSION IS THAT AL-HASSAN IS DISCOURAGED BY LACK OF A
UNIFIED ARAB WILL OR PLAN TO COPE WITH MIDDLE EAST SITUATION
AS IT EXISTS IN EARLY 1977.

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2. AL-HASSAN SAID THAT, CONTRARY TO SENTIMENT THAT 1977
WOULD BE YEAR OF A SETTLEMENT, NOTHING WILL BE ACHIEVED THIS
YEAR BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION, I.E.,
MAY ELECTIONS STALLING ANY MOVEMENT UNTIL ELECTIONS COMPLETED.
HE ALSO THOUGHT UPCOMING CHANGES IN UN SECURITY COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP WOULD WORK AGAINST ARABS. HE EXPECTED NEW
AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION TO BE DISTRACTED BY EVENTS ELSEWHERE,

LEAVING A NO-WAR, NO-PEACE SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST WHICH COULD ONLY WORK TO ADVANTAGE OF THE ISRAELIS. AL-HASSAN PREDICTED THAT STALEMATE WOULD NOT LAST, BUT WOULD LEAD TO "RISING UP" OF ARAB MASSES. IMPLICATION IS THAT UPRISING WOULD BE UNCONTROLLED AND LEAD TO FURTHER INSTABILITY IN CERTAIN ARAB STATES.

3. COMPLAINING THAT ARABS HAVE NO POLITICAL OR MILITARY ACTION PLAN, AL-HASSAN URGED ARAB NATIONS TO USE OIL AND ARAB SOLIDARITY TO MOVE SITUATION OF DEAD CENTER. ANOTHER ARAB SUMMIT WOULD BE USEFUL, POSSIBLE TO BE SCHEDULED AFTER AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT. AL-HASSAN STATED THAT MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM WILL NOT BE SOLVED BY MERE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE ON WEST BANK AND GAZA. A MORE "RADICAL" SOLUTION IS REQUIRED.

4. AL-HASSAN CLAIMED THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD INSULTED ARABS BY DECLARING "THAT THE US WILL NOT EXERT ANY PRESSURE ON ISRAEL" AND BY ASKING PLO TO RECOGNIZE RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 AS BASIS FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. REFERRING TO VANCE AS A LAWYER FROM "ARISTOCRATIC CLASS" WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION SALE OF SKYHAWKS TO ISRAEL, AL-HASSAN REPORTEDLY COMMENTED THAT VANCE ONLY WANTS TO BUY TIME FOR ISRAEL, NOT REAL PEACE IN THE REGION. AS FOR NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION, AL-HASSAN FELT PRESIDENT CARTER SYMPATHIZES WITH ISRAEL BECAUSE CARTER BELIEVES ISRAEL WAS CREATED IN PALESTINE BY GOD'S WILL; IN FACT, ALL THE PRESIDENT'S AIDES ARE HOSTILE TO THE ARABS, AL-HASSAN CONCLUDED.

5. COMMENT: THE BITTERNESS AND NEGATIVISM OF AL-HASSAN'S INTERVIEW PRESENT STRIKING CONTRASTS TO EVERYTHING ELSE HE HAS
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BEEN REPORTED SAYING OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. EMBASSY SPECULATES THAT AL-HASSAN IS EITHER VERY ANNOYED AND DISCOURAGED AT WHAT HE SAW OR EXPERIENCED DURING RECENT HIGH-LEVEL PALESTINIAN TALKS IN SYRIA, OR THAT HE IS HERALDING A DECISION BY PLO TO ADOPT TOUGHER LINE ON KEY ISSUES IN THE FUTURE.
MAESTRONE

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